

The University of Maine

DigitalCommons@UMaine

General University of Maine Publications

University of Maine Publications

Fall 2007

Maine Peace Action Committee Newsletter

Maine Peace Action Committee

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/univ_publications



Part of the [Higher Education Commons](#), and the [History Commons](#)

This Newsletter is brought to you for free and open access by DigitalCommons@UMaine. It has been accepted for inclusion in General University of Maine Publications by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@UMaine. For more information, please contact um.library.technical.services@maine.edu.

Maine Peace Action Committee

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The Maine Peace Action Committee (MPAC) was founded in 1974 with a special focus on ending the war in Indochina. MPAC has been concerned with our society's violent and militaristic nature, which is manifested in a lack of humane and progressive values and a tendency towards solving problems via destructive means.

Our general orientation takes the double focus of analyzing and opposing militarism, or the efforts to use nuclear weapons and other military means to solve human problems, and imperialism, or the efforts by powerful nations to use economic and military means to impose their will upon less powerful peoples.

Our nation's pursuit of these policies undermines its ability to deal with the needs of its own citizens and places us in greater danger of war. Our tax dollars are used to develop first strike capable weapons and to support repressive regimes abroad. Consequently, there are fewer dollars available for needed human services both here and abroad.

If we direct our energy and other resources into weapons systems, there is little left for creative solutions to problems such as the world food and fuel shortages which threaten our survival.

We have seen human needs are neglected by an existing government, and when that government represses groups attempting to meet those needs, violent upheaval has resulted. Our government's military economic support for such repressive regimes has embroiled us in armed conflicts which have escalated to full scale war and could mean inevitable global destruction.

We support efforts to deal with each of these problems since we see them as resulting and contributing to an economic and political system over which most of us have little control.

We in MPAC believe that while none of these efforts by itself can bring about a completely just society, together we can work toward more comprehensive solutions. We feel that we can best contribute by challenging militarism and imperialism and proposing alternatives to these policies.

We find we can act effectively if we focus on a limited number of specific issues and campaigns. We need projects which can:

1. unite people within our group
2. provide opportunities for action resulting in measurable achievement
3. link our efforts with national campaigns; and
4. demonstrate the dynamics of militarism and imperialism.

For our activities to be successful, we need to educate ourselves about issues, analyze the contributing factors, investigate alternative solutions, decide strategy for implementing alternatives, and share our understanding with the community to enlist their support.

MPAC believes that people united and working together can redefine our values and change our approach to problems so that we shall be able to live in a free and creative society; indeed, such efforts are imperative if we are to survive.

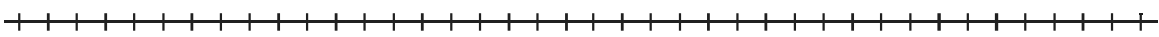
Table of Contents

Vol. 33, No. 1 • Fall 2007

Statement of Purpose	1
The Iraq War and Occupation: What is to be done?Doug Allen	2
Why Universal Single-Payer Health Care is the Right ChoiceAnna Sweeney	5
Why IMMEDIATE Withdrawal?Andrea Johnsen	7
War Profiteering 101 Or: How I learned to stop worrying about war crimes tribunals and enjoy a good war	8
Religion and Violence Today: Part IIDoug Allen	10
Shadow of a Dictator: Reflections on PinochetMolly Haley and Jeff Hake	13
PreoccupationsAdam Davis	14
Ten Reasons Voting Democrat Isn't EnoughDavid Reid	15
Peace & Justice Film Series Available at FoglerMartin Wallace	15

What difference does it make to the dead, the orphans and the homeless,
whether the mad destruction is wrought under the name of
totalitarianism or the holy name of liberty or democracy?

— Mahatma Gandhi, *Non-Violence in Peace and War*



Visit the MPAC website: <http://www.umaine.edu/mpac/>

THE IRAQ WAR AND OCCUPATION: WHAT IS TO BE DONE?

Note: On September 27, 2007, I presented the following information and analysis for the weekly Socialist and Marxist Studies Lecture Series that is sponsored by the Marxist-Socialist Studies Interdisciplinary Minor and cosponsored by MPAC, Campus Activities and Events, and the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. In this article, I have retained the informal style of the presentation.

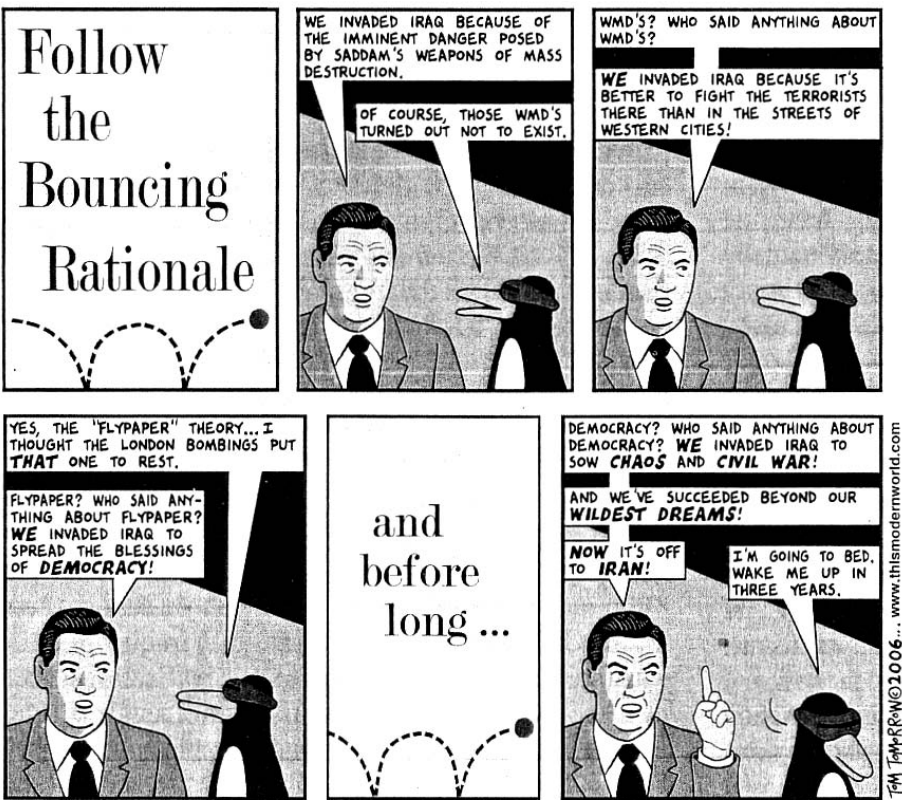
Also I want to note that recently there's been an upsurge in the position that Senator Olympia Snowe has now taken and that many Democrats in the House and Senate now express and that is taken by the media to be "antiwar." These so-called antiwar politicians disagree with over 75% of what I'm going to present. Their recent "antiwar" position goes something like this.

so corrupt and so beholden to sectarian religious forces and militias that there are limits to what we Americans can do. Our best are being sacrificed. It's time to pull back.

Let me make clear that I totally reject this position that claims to be antiwar. It places all of the blame for this disaster on the Iraqis. It reveals a lot of arrogance, racism, and the typical colonial attitude toward the other. So let me indicate my position very briefly and then give you the lessons behind my position.

My Position

My position is we should end funding for the Iraq War and occupation. My position is that we should remove all troops, and we should remove all private contractors, roughly the size of the U.S. military occupation force. This removal should take place as soon as possible, which can be done in a matter of months, not years. We should also eliminate the plans that call for permanent U.S. military bases in Iraq. Current plans are to have at least six major bases in Iraq, many of which have been removed from Saudi Arabia and will be established and maintained in Iraq permanently. We should cut back on the expensive and extravagant U.S. Embassy in Baghdad that is now being finished as the largest U.S. embassy in the world. Of great significance, U.S. corporations do not have the right to control the oil of Iraq, which is what our government intends through their determined attempts to push through oil legislation that forces on Iraqis very profitable arrangements for foreign corporate interests.

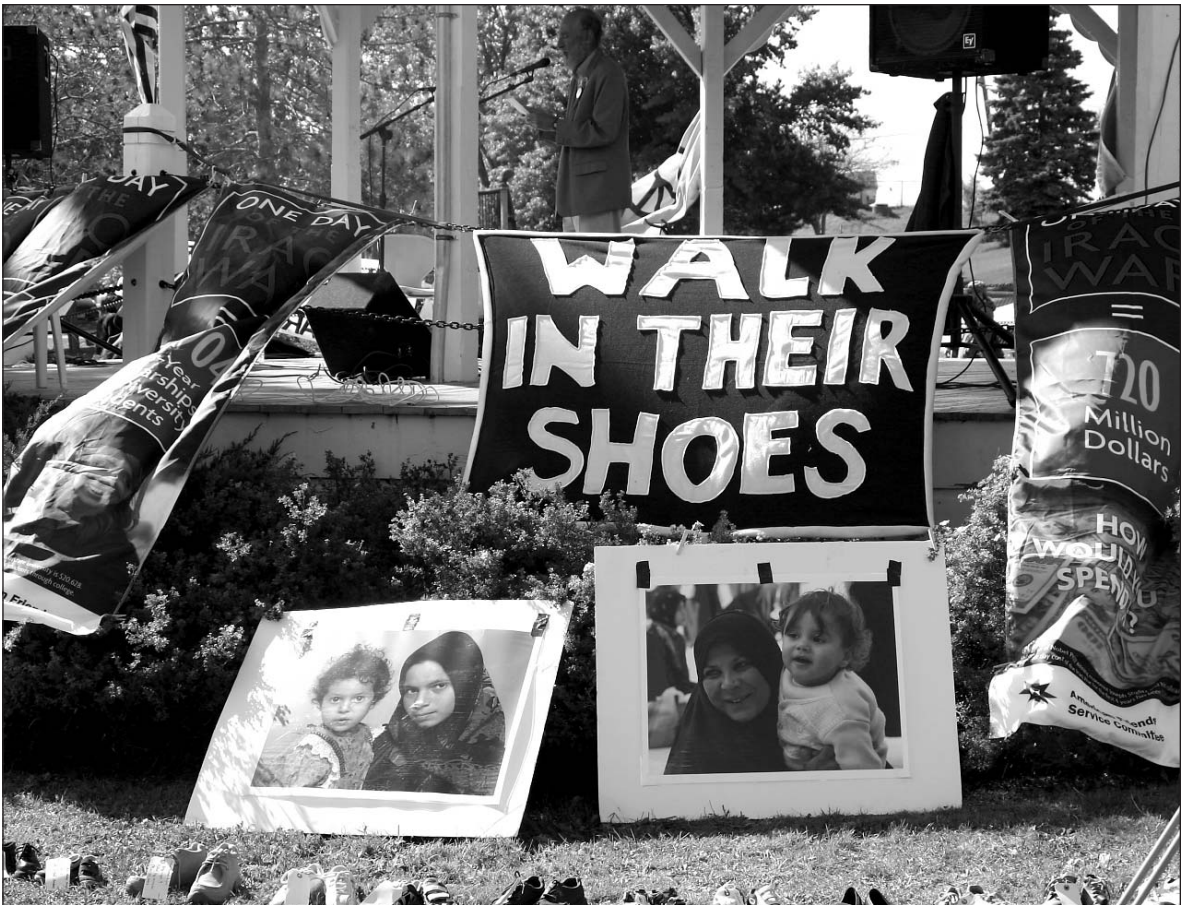


Introduction

The Iraq war and occupation dominate the news but usually without any understanding of the lessons of why I have arrived at my present position. It's easy to be against the war. Polls show at least 70% in the U.S. say they are against the war. The percentage of opposition globally is even higher. The current situation in Iraq is very messy. If I were presenting this ten years ago, five years ago, or three years ago, I could have more easily presented a position as to how we should change our policy with limited damage. It's now very messy and violent, whether the U.S. military and corporations stay in or quickly leave, and it's going to be very messy and violent in Iraq's future.

I think it's unfair to ask of the antiwar movement that we must provide some noncontroversial blueprint—that's going to guarantee, for example, that Iraqis aren't going to slaughter each other—before we pull out. The assumption is that Iraqis are not already slaughtering each other and hundreds of thousands of people are not already dying in Iraq. Such a demand is an unfair burden placed on us, and is used by U.S. policymakers to perpetuate their war and occupation of terror, militarism, and imperial economic exploitation. But I'll present what I think is the best course of action where there are no easy guaranteed solutions.

The problem in Iraq is the Iraqis. They don't deserve our generosity. We have sacrificed, through our blood and economically, but the Iraqis are so corrupt that they are unwilling to bring about the political changes required for stability, security, and democracy. Those Iraqi politicians we are now attacking are often our people; we put into office, and they were supposed to represent our interests. But in fact they are



Banners and Pictures of Iraqi Civilians at the End the War! Build the Peace! Rally on Sept. 29, 2007 in Bangor (All photos in this article are by Judy Rusk.)

At the same time, I'm not an isolationist. So I support diplomatic efforts to deal with the crisis in Iraq. This should be done through the United Nations. It should involve the neighbors of Iraq. It should involve other Islamic countries. There should be all kinds of initiatives. There's a need for international peacekeepers. There's a need for Iraqi peace conferences involving dialogue and negotiations. I believe in the need for multibillion-dollar reparations. I believe there have to be all kinds of efforts toward reconciliation and trust building.

So I do favor a proactive stance, but not under the conditions that I am about to lay out, which are conditions of U.S. domination and control. And the most important lesson in terms of what has to be done is to change U.S. foreign policy. Iraq is a microcosm that illustrates general lessons of U.S. priorities and policies at home and abroad that need to be changed. So what I now intend to do is to delineate five lessons. My position is that you have to understand the lessons of Iraq in order to understand what needs to be done.

Five Lessons from the Iraq War and Occupation

One lesson we can call *ignorance*. Ignorance of our policymakers and ignorance of the public. Ignorance about Iraq's history. Ignorance about Iraq's religions. Ignorance about Iraq's culture. And also, especially on the part of the public, ignorance of past U.S. policies toward Iraq and that region. We are a little better informed than we were in 1990–1 leading up to the first Gulf War or in 2002–3 leading up to the latest invasion and Iraq war and occupation, but there is still mass ignorance. As Santayana told us, those who do not learn from history are doomed to repeat it. You hear leading media figures, politicians, and corporate leaders, as well as ordinary citizens, spouting the same self-serving stereotypes and misinformed views. So we have to deal with the ignorance. Because if

you know more about Iraqi culture, history, religion, and U.S. policies, you come up with different conclusions as to what needs to be done.

Secondly, there are all kinds of lessons about *militarism*. It's very tempting for the U.S. to impose unilateral military force and, as with Iraq, preemptive military force. It's very tempting because military force is the one area where the U.S. has overwhelming superiority. We now spend more on the military than all the other nations in the world combined. So it's tempting to forgo diplomatic and other measures and simply use your overwhelming military superiority to impose your will on others. This is very dangerous, for example, when we are now talking about and planning for preemptive military strikes on and invasion of Iran. The same scenario is being played out among the planners. The same militarists who led us into the Iraq disaster are talking about new preventive strikes and new militarist policies and actions. To do this they see the need for permanent military bases in Iraq so that the U.S. will be the dominant military force in the region. Instead, we must learn the real lessons of failed U.S. militarism in Iraq and the need to change such policies.

Thirdly, there are the lessons about *imperialism* that to me are even more important and shape the first two lessons. Here we find lessons about the imperialist imperative of global domination; lessons about policies being driven by multinational and transnational, dominant, corporate interests. In this case of the Iraq war and occupation, central are the interests and power of the oil companies with their need to control Iraqi oil. This is a key part of the need of the U.S. economic, military, and political elite to build and maintain the U.S. global empire as part of this imperialist venture, where the whole world becomes your "back yard" and you have vital interests everywhere. As part of this imperialism, as seen in U.S. policies toward Iraq, we arrogantly proclaim we in fact have "the truth" and we are "good" while those who oppose



Gold Star Mother Mary Alice Horrigan, who lost her son in Iraq, addresses End the War Rally.

us are "evil." Therefore, we are justified in imposing our priorities, views, and values on Iraqis and on the whole world. This is really in the best interests of others whether they know it or not.

There are many lessons about U.S. imperialism in Iraq that we must learn in deciding what is to be done. There are clear lessons of occupation that involve the lessons of resistance: that people don't simply submit to imperial domination and control. We continue to devalue and underestimate the resistance Iraqis have to occupation by dismissing them as evil religious fanatics, "insurgents," and "terrorists." And there are lessons in this regard about terrorism, if you want to put it in the framework of Washington's "war on terror."

Before the U.S. invasion of Iraq in March 2003, Iraq was not a center of terrorism. Saddam Hussein was a brutal dictator, including the period of the 1980s when he was a major U.S. ally and when he killed and tortured the most people. When the U.S. invaded and occupied Iraq, Saddam Hussein did not have weapons of mass destruction, and Iraq had no connection with terrorist attacks of 9-11. As a matter of fact, Saddam Hussein was a secular leader, who suppressed religious Islamic forces and had little use for Al Qaeda and that kind of religious ideology. What we do know is that Iraq was not a center of terrorism, but it is now certainly a center of terrorism. The U.S. occupation of Iraq, rather than being a force of liberation, has served as a visible catalyst, a major source of recruitment, for creating, developing, and increasing anti-American terrorism.

The fourth lesson is a very simple one that I'll simply call *lies and manipulation*. We were lied to. You can use euphemistic language indicating that information was used selectively, that some information was suppressed, and that we were misled and not told the whole truth. But the truth is that we were lied to right from the begin-



Mourning the Iraqi and U.S. dead

ning. So we have to ask ourselves: “What are the real reasons for the invasion and occupation of Iraq?” What does this say about “democracy” in a society where those in charge manipulate information, lie to us, and use the corporate media to mislead and to control us? Part of any vibrant democracy is that the people have information and can make informed decisions. There has to be a decent level of trust. And one of the lessons of the Iraq war and occupation is that there is no reason today for us to trust our political, military, and corporate leaders when they recycle and repackage their lies of the past and claim that staying the course and spending hundreds of billions of dollars more is in the best interest of the U.S. and the Iraqi people. And what makes the deceiving, manipulating, and lying really criminal and obscene is that they have led to the unnecessary death of hundreds of thousands of innocent human beings and the suffering of countless millions in Iraq, in the U.S., and throughout the world.

And finally we have to learn many lessons from the *disaster* of Iraq. As previously noted, more than 70% of Americans are now against the war. It’s been a disaster. Even increasing numbers of Republicans and conservatives, who may only be concerned with U.S. economic and military power and domination, grasp that the Bush Administration policies toward Iraq have been a disaster. The war and occupation have been a disaster in terms of the physical cost. Let’s talk about close to 4,000 dead Americans, although the figure is a lot higher than that based on how officials calculate who actually counts as a war death. Thousands more are physically damaged and psychologically damaged for life. But we rarely talk about the hundreds of thousands of Iraqis who have lost their lives, 90% of whom are children, women, and other innocent civilians. We talk about the financial costs. We now have spent 500 billion dollars on the war, and the Administration is about to receive another 200 billion dollars. So there’s physical, psychological, and financial damage. And I’m not even describing the disaster to Iraq where the real devastation has taken place.

Another disaster is the erosion of our rights and freedoms. We should be very worried about being pawns in the manipulated game of fear effectively used by policy-makers to deflect our attention and to undermine basic principles of our U.S. Constitution and Bill of Rights. We are supposed to give up more and more of our rights and freedoms so that the Bush Administration can attack “the enemy” in Iraq before “they” attack us here. This is a big danger for American democracy if we don’t learn from this lesson of disaster.

Another serious disaster, beyond anything I’ve experienced in my lifetime, is the level and extent of anti-American feeling generated by the U.S. war and occupa-

tion of Iraq. One finds this anti-American feeling even among those who are supposed to be traditional U.S. allies. This is why people throughout the world find George Bush and his policies the greatest threat to world peace and a greater threat to the survival of humankind than the policies of Osama Bin Laden and Al Qaeda.

In terms of the disaster of the Iraq war and occupation, we should have learned the lesson that you don’t combat terrorism with more terror, including the intended U.S. shock and awe terror. You don’t terrorize people into submission. Gandhi was correct on that. You have to find ways to break the causal links of violence and terror, rather than exacerbating the cause-effect, means-ends, escalating cycles of violence and terror, as have the U.S. war and occupation done in Iraq.

And finally, when we think of the lessons of the disastrous war and occupation, are we more secure? I think that most people would agree we are far less secure. And I refer to real security on every level, not just U.S. foreign policy, but as also including decent healthcare for all, a safe and sustainable environment, good jobs with adequate pay, and adequate funding of education necessary for a secure, meaningful, democratic society. In all of these areas, we are much less secure than we were and that’s directly related to the costs of the war and the priorities of those who promote and profit from war.

Conclusion on the Iraq War and Occupation

In concluding what needs to be done, it is important to keep in mind that the U.S. is involved in a foreign occupation. The U.S. in Iraq has nothing to do liberation. We are seen as an occupying, not a liberating force. What we’re doing in Iraq, as seen in the results of our military force and the private corporate contractors, is to increase insecurity, terrorism, suffering, and devastation. We are now part of the problem, not part of the solution. The fact that polls consistently show that 75% or more of Iraqis want us to leave is revealing. Even those Iraqis who favored overthrowing Saddam Hussein are now telling us to leave.

How do our policymakers, leading politicians, and establishment media respond? We are told that we owe something to Iraq, so we can’t leave now. We

have a responsibility to stay. We broke it, so we need to stay to fix it. I’m not just talking about the neoconservatives who took us into the war and other hardliners who use this kind of argument as a pretense for continuing with their objectives of U.S. militarism, imperialism, and empire. I’m also talking about genuinely well-intentioned U.S. citizens who say we owe it to the Iraqi people to stay. Let me say that there’s something here about this attitude that always bothers me. Even when it’s well intentioned, it reflects a neocolonial, imperialist attitude. U.S. Americans talk about Iraq as “our problem” and how “we need to fix it.” This often strikes me as similar to the old colonial, imperialist attitude toward “the natives” who had been colonized and then needed to be helped by those who had dominated them.

Yes, Iraq has a big problem, and it is up to Iraqis to fix it. It’s their country. No one gave the U.S. the right and the power to be in a position of domination determining what is best for Iraq. Such an attitude in the U.S. is arrogant and obscene, especially when the U.S. has already been responsible for killing hundreds of thousands of people and for so much suffering. Yes, we certainly do owe something to Iraqis. We owe a lot to the Iraqis because of all the damage and suffering we have created, but it’s not for us to occupy and determine the future of Iraq. It’s for Iraqis to decide. In terms of the real lessons of the Iraq war and occupation, we

See *WHAT IS TO BE DONE?* on Page 7



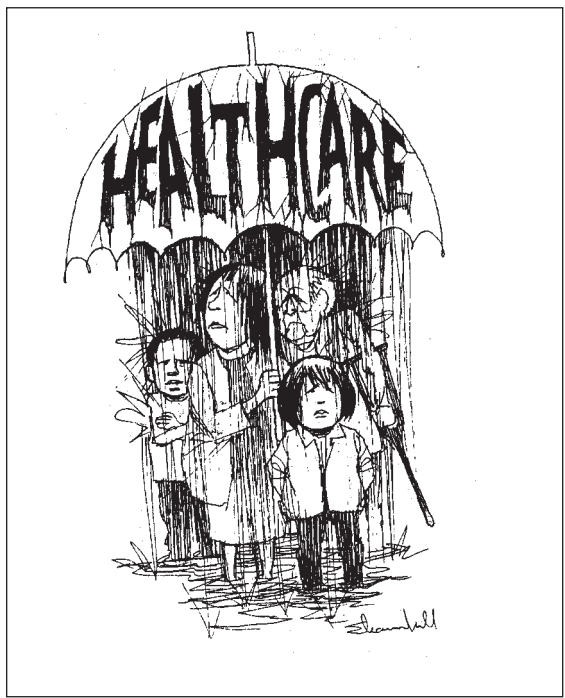
Lady Liberty was viewed as lying “in state” as we mourned our loss of liberties. Then during a responsive reading of the Declaration of Independence, she was revived and raised as we reclaimed our rights and freedoms.

WHY UNIVERSAL SINGLE-PAYER HEALTH CARE IS THE RIGHT CHOICE

In the United States 47 million people are uninsured and millions more are underinsured, with deductibles of over \$5000 per year per family member. In fact, studies by the Institute of Medicine show that 18,000 Americans die each year as a result of lack of health insurance. The sad fact is that even though the United States spends far more in terms of gross domestic product (GDP) on healthcare than other industrialized countries, Americans are the least protected in terms of health care rights. Our infant mortality and life expectancy rates, which are the generally accepted indicators of health, lag behind comparable industrialized countries with national health care systems.

Why do most other industrialized countries have well established national health care systems and the United States still does not?

The brief answer is that the U.S. does not have a “labor party” or a strong labor movement, representing the working class. This has been shown to be a common factor in countries that adopt single-payer universal health care plans. After World War II, when other countries were building strong labor movements and struggling to create health and welfare promoting government agencies, the United States was engaging in a cold war with the Soviet Union. The fear mongering, most widely recognized in the McCarthyism of the 1950’s, part of the second red scare, caused many unions and labor movements to be gutted and forced them to operate in a survival mode, under constant attack as “communists”. Thus, money that could have been spent on establishing a world-class single-payer universal health care system was then spent on an arms race with the Soviet Union leading to the military industrial complex.



Why are Americans spending so much on health care?

The myth is that consumers drive up the cost of health care by overusing their benefits and insisting on the very best care. This is far from the truth. Americans do not have more frequent or longer hospital stays or visit the doctor more often than the citizens of other industrialized countries. Americans also do not receive more highly technological care than people in these comparable countries. In fact Europeans and Japanese get many more highly technological tests, such as computed tomography (CT) and magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scans, than Americans do. The cost and the results just do not add up in any way that makes sense.

The main cause for the exorbitant dissonance between American health care costs, and the health benefits actually available to most citizens has to do with our for profit system. There is approximately \$50 billion a year in profit taken out of our health care system, and this figure is miniscule compared to the amount of money that is spent extracting it. About \$350 billion per year is spent on bureaucratic costs that perform non-health care related functions to distribute health care according to ability to pay and enforce the collection of profit by insurance companies, for-profit hospitals, and the drug industry. In addition, insurance companies are unregulated in terms of pricing and benefits, and any health care plan that includes them will ultimately be unaffordable.

And any plan that includes subsidizing individuals, a la Massachusetts and Mitt Romney, to get them to buy health insurance plans, which are often limited in benefits, with high deductibles and low total benefit ceilings, are essentially taking tax payer dollars and giving them directly to insurance companies, who are taking a large percentage of each dollar for private profits, and providing a poorer product in return. Basically, poor and working class people will still have policies that have high deductibles and low benefit ceilings. The bottom line is that health insurance premiums have risen 87% since 2000, while worker earnings have only risen 20%, so even subsidized, good insurance policies will be unaffordable for most people.



What about rationing?

Many people are scared by the tales of Canadian health care rationing. The truth is that health care is currently rationed in the United States. It’s just that in the U.S. it’s rationed on an ability to pay system. If you are rich or have good health insurance you receive immediate care; if you are working class with bad health insurance you wait until you are really sick and then you go to the doctor and become debt ridden; if you are poor, you never get treatment until it’s an immediate life threatening situation and maybe you die, you’re in debt, or your bill is written off by the hospital. In fact, the major cause for personal bankruptcy in this country is medical bill debt.

Although Canada’s system is not perfect, it at least has a more equitable system for its health care rationing, when it is necessary. The rationing in Canada is based on the urgency of the needed procedure, which is perhaps not ideal, but much more reasonable and humane than the current American system. In addition, the rationing in Canada appears to be caused by government cuts in healthcare funding, leaving room for the private medical industry to grow.

The current strategy in Canada seems to be similar to the strategy in public education in the U.S. The government underfunds it to the point of breaking down and then attacks it for its inadequacies. Canadians are struggling against these changes because they appreciate having universal health care. The reality is that, even with its problems, Canada’s health statistics are superior to U.S. statistics, and patient outcomes for those treated are basically the same. Meanwhile the average American spends about twice as much on medical care as the average Canadian.

What’s the role of inequality in health and health care?

Health care is a human right, much in the same way that food, shelter, education, security, and liberty are. And access should not be based on ability to pay. It’s not something, like a cell phone or new car, that a person can reasonably decide not to acquire. And in the United States, it is incredibly expensive, out of the realm of possibility for many people, even if they go without any “extras” and work full time. This is simply unacceptable in the wealthiest nation in the world.

One of the things that makes the U.S. unique among the industrialized nations of the world is that it is the most economically unequal. Many believe that this, in addition to lack of access to health care, is a major reason for the relatively poor U.S. health statistics. Studies reveal that social inequality is an independent factor in determining health, and that as social inequality increases; health worsens for ALL members of that society. As costs for basic necessities such as food, housing, education, childcare and health care have risen, wages have stagnated and benefits packages through employers have shrunk or disappeared. This inequality can be demonstrated by the average CEO to average worker pay ratio; which is around 400:1, when in 1980 it was around 40:1.

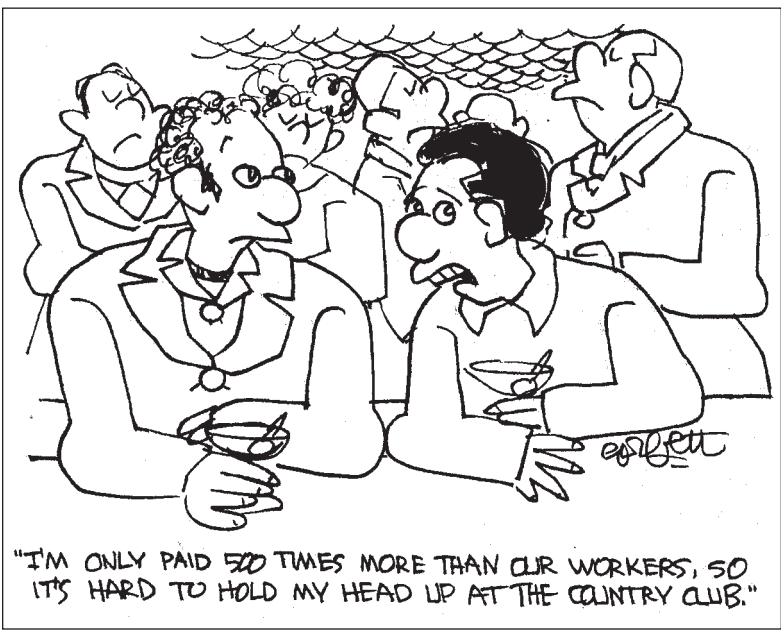
How will we pay for universal single-payer health care?

According to Physicians for a National Health Program, paying for universal single-payer health care could be quite simple. Right now 64% of the U.S health-care system is financed by public funds (e.g. taxes). This pays for Medicare, Medicaid, the VA, public employees, elected officials, military personnel, and large tax subsidies to employers who help employees pay for their health insurance. Individual out-of-pocket expenses account for 17% of U.S. health care costs. And private employers pay the remaining 19%.

Essentially, the gap, consisting of the 17% and 19% now paid by individuals and employers, could be filled with a 7% payroll tax (paid by employers) and a 2% income tax (paid by individuals). These taxes would replace all current employer and individual health care costs. For most people this tax increase would be far less than they currently spend on insurance premiums, co-pays, deductibles, or waiting until their illness is severe before accessing health care. And for businesses that are currently providing or subsidizing health care this would be a substantial savings.

It would be a shared responsibility with an equitable result because everybody would have the same access to health care. This would include medical, hospital, eye, dental, long-term, and mental health care. Plus we would be able to cut out approximately \$200 billion per year of the current \$400 billion (\$50 billion of profit and \$350 billion to extract the profit) spent in the elimination of profit and overhead which goes to things like paperwork, CEO salaries, profits, and other non-clinical costs. All of this would keep quality of care up and health worker wages at the current levels. Medicare has only a 3% overhead, while HMOs typically carry an overhead of 15-25%. And for every dollar spent on private insurance, 85 cents is spent on care, while for every dollar spent on Medicare, 97 cents is spent on care.

Another cost saving and quality of life enhancing product of single-payer universal health care is that people will seek treatment early which is when diseases are more successfully and affordably treatable. Preventative care will become more prevalent. A major problem with the current for profit health care system is that there’s not a lot of money to be made in prevention. But there is a lot to be saved when people seek care earlier and can access more preventative care.



then paying again through the exorbitant prices of many medications. Studies actually show that clinical research tends to decrease when areas become more involved with HMOs.

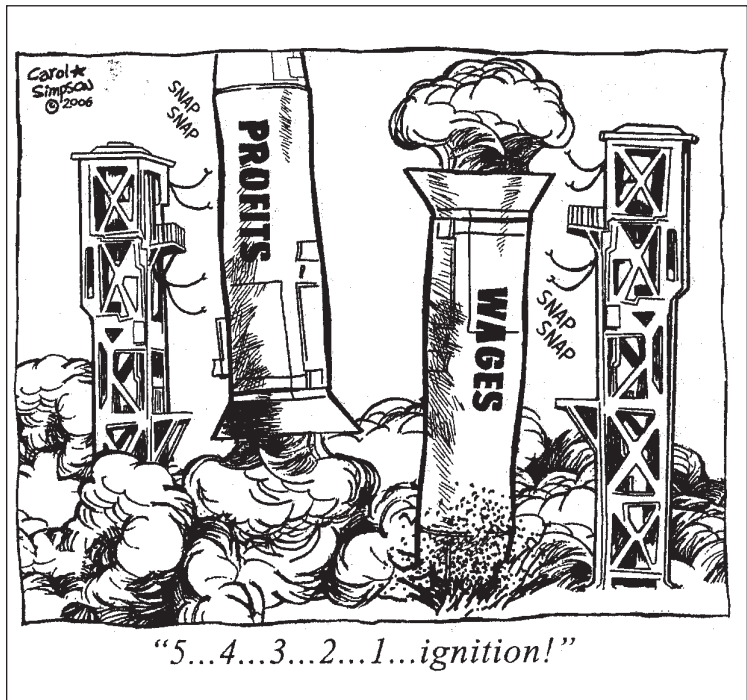
In a universal single-payer system where profit for companies is not a concern, we as a society can collectively decide which areas of research are most important to us. We could explore preventative and non-medication based treatments much more thoroughly and frequently. Under the current system, because it is based on monetary profits for companies, these companies have no incentive to apply for government research funding grants that study prevention, because ultimately the companies only make a profit when people are sick and need health equipment or medication.

Why is health care so important?

The bottom line is that health is a universal concern. Everyone needs access to health care in order to live a fulfilling life, and in some cases, to live at all. Health is at the core of who we are, how we see ourselves, and what sort of life we will lead. Everyone deserves to be as healthy as they can be, because without health, there is no safety, no loving and belonging, no confidence and achievement, and no self-actualization (from Maslow’s hierarchy of needs). Recently, I heard a Cuban doctor describe health care, as a form of love, which makes the term *health care* make a lot more sense.

In addition, health is a form of power, and the knowledge and provision of health care puts one in a position of power. And history shows that power consolidated is generally power abused. Health care should not be used as a tool to create profits for a privileged and wealthy minority, it should be used to empower as many people as possible to become effective and fulfilled human beings. And effective and fulfilled human beings are the basis for a safe, productive, and enjoyable society.

— Anna Sweeney



What happens to medical research and drug research?

The truth is that much of medical and drug research done now in the United States is already publicly funded by the government through departments such as the National Institutes of Health. Pharmaceutical companies are then invited in to market the medication after the expensive trials have taken place. So essentially tax payers are subsidizing research that is making drug companies extremely rich, and

WHY IMMEDIATE WITHDRAWAL?

We need to remove our military from Iraq now. Iraq is a mess, and we are responsible. Some feel that because we are responsible for all of this devastation, we have a responsibility to stay and “fix it”. We do have a responsibility to acknowledge what we have done is wrong, and do everything we can to help Iraq. It is what will help Iraq that needs to be understood.

Our military occupation of Iraq does not help Iraq in any way. The military is not trained to rebuild Iraq. The military’s presence only maintains conflict. It is perpetuating “terrorism” we have created. We cannot have five military stations (or the world’s largest embassy) in Iraq. We have not been given permission by Iraq. What will we do without a stronghold in the Middle East? We won’t be able to attack Iran. What will we do without oil? It doesn’t matter because it is not ours. We have no right to be controlling Iraq’s oil. It’s not their fault that our country has developed to such a high level of oil dependence, and we need to address this issue with a new approach. Instead of stealing oil to continue our oil-dependent system, we need to address the issue of our oil-dependence.

Opponents of withdrawal may argue that if we remove our troops, Iraq will become unstable, and the religious tension will escalate. However, Iraq is already unstable. It is evident that our presence has not been and

is not working toward a stabilizing effect. We can’t do anything about religious tension that already exists. Iraq will be unstable, but it already is.

Iraq needs to rebuild Iraq. It is their country. They must be in charge of rebuilding it. They do not need our direct intervention in their healing process. They need their neighbors, not us. We have no business telling them what to do with their country.

We need to formally acknowledge that what we have done is wrong; that we are responsible for hundreds of thousands of deaths, and massive destruction. We need to stop using our country’s resources for military occupation, and we need to start giving them resources for reparation.

—Andrea Johnsen



According to a nationwide survey conducted by the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press October 17–23, 2007,

54 percent

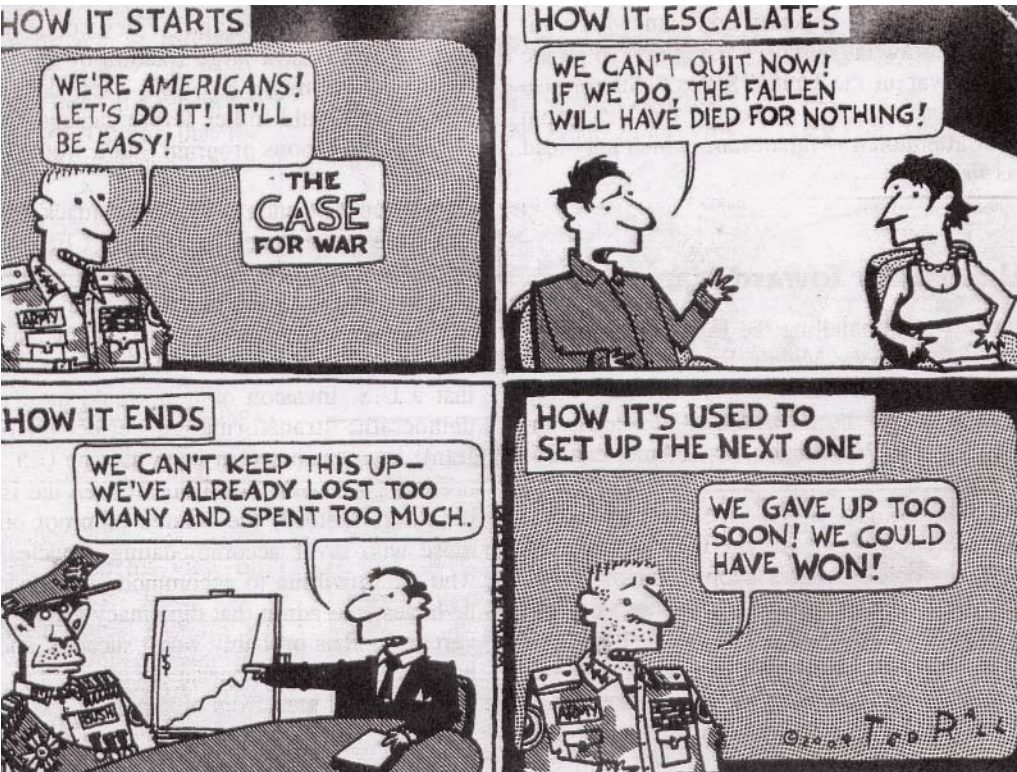
of respondents think the United States should bring its troops home from Iraq as soon as possible. This figure has remained consistent since July 2007.

WHAT IS TO BE DONE?

(continued from Page 4)

owe Iraq billions of dollars in reparations. We should be working with others to try to restore the healthcare system and to rebuild the hospitals and medical facilities. We should be concerned about the need for clean water, electricity, education, job opportunities, and the infrastructure we have destroyed. That’s also the best way to deal with foreign terrorism and U.S. terrorism that has devastated Iraq. But it’s not for us to impose our will. We can do all of this while removing our American military forces, closing down our military bases, cutting off military funds, and removing our corporate private contractors that have been essential to our failed Iraq war and occupation.

—Doug Allen



WAR PROFITEERING 101 OR: How I learned to stop worrying about war crimes tribunals and enjoy a good war

The following is a transcript from an address given by former Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld, at Stanford University following his appointment to the Hoover Institution. The title of the address is: "War Profiteering 101: Or How I Learned to Stop Worrying About War Crimes Tribunals and Enjoy a Good War."

Moderator: Tonight I am pleased to introduce to you a very distinguished war profiteer. This person has been involved in a very direct way, with many of the great war profiteering schemes of the late 20th and early 21st centuries. He has recently retired from one of the preeminent war profiteering administrations in U.S. history where he was Secretary of Defense. In short, ladies and gentleman, along with Vice President Dick Cheney, he is one of the top war profiteers our country has produced. Ladies and Gentlemen, Donald Rumsfeld. (applause)

Rumsfeld: Good evening Ladies and Gentlemen, Distinguished guests, major campaign donors and, as I understand it, there are even a few students in attendance tonight. Thank you for inviting me to speak on a subject that I have felt strongly about since my days in the Ford Administration. War Profiteering is often misunderstood by many people and I relish the opportunity tonight to set the record straight.

There are some basic fundamentals in war profiteering that I will try to touch base on tonight and then if there is time we can perhaps have a few questions from the audience.

1. The biggest mistake that would-be war profiteers make is that they seem to believe that they have to wait for a war to start for the profits to start rolling in. This couldn't be further from the truth. In fact, if you're waiting for a war to break out before you begin to make your move, you're already too late to the game. The experienced war profiteer does not sit back and wait. He sees opportunities before they have fully developed, or better yet, he creates those opportunities from scratch. Creating a pretext for war is a time honored tradition in this country. Remember, a few thousand land mines or M-16 rifles can turn a non-situation into a profit center for generations to come.



Case Studies #1 Spanish American War, Vietnam

Although certainly not the only two fabricated excuses for war, or the most recent, they are certainly two of the most infamous. In 1898, the USS Maine exploded in Havana bay killing 266 crewmembers. The U.S. blamed the Spanish despite evidence that the explosion occurred internally. The Maine's commander cautioned against jumping to the conclusion that it was an enemy attack. U.S Newspapers, notably those owned by Hearst, called for war with Spain. Two months later Congress declared war.

In Vietnam, it was the Tonkin Gulf incident. A U.S. destroyer, the USS Maddox was aggressively patrolling the North Vietnamese Tonkin Gulf trying to provoke an attack.. When none came, the U.S. invented the attack as a pretext for war leading the U.S. into a brutal and devastating war.

2. Don't make the mistake of limiting your profit potential to just one side of the conflict. This "marketing myopia" is common in newbies and it really doesn't make any sense. I mean, it is incredibly difficult to fight a one-sided war, unless, of course, you control 100% of the media, so it stands to reason that both sides will need weapons in increasing numbers as the conflict rages on.

Case Study #2 The Iran/Iraq War

Ronald Reagan wasn't going to let a little thing like "congressional oversight" prevent him from reaching his full potential as a war profiteer and this is an important lesson that you can use immediately in your own work. Don't listen to the nay-sayers. Reagan was able to supply weapons to both the Iraqis under Saddam Hussein and the Iranians under the Ayatollah at the same time. Very few people in history have had this type of drive and determination and it shows in the results.

3. Don't overlook the "poor" countries. These can be incredibly profitable. Just because a country lacks the money to provide basic necessities to its people does not mean that they do not have a military budget. In fact, thanks to organizations like the World Bank and the IMF, that may be all they have. So don't turn your nose up just because of famine or drought.

Case Study #3 U.S. Weapons sales to Third World Countries

According to a 2007 Congressional Study, the U.S has maintained its position as the number one supplier of weapons to third world nations. In 2006, the U.S sold over \$10.3 Billion in weapons to developing nations.

4. Dictators are our friends. From Hitler to Saddam, dictators have been great for the bottom line. If you're really ambitious, you can double up the profits just like we did in Iraq. There is a certain beauty in the simplicity of this type of operation. You



start out very simply, selling weapons to your friendly neighborhood dictator and when profits begin to dry up or geo-political factors shift, you simply attack that same dictator. I've personally always considered this more of a triple play, as it were, because the new regime that you put in to replace the old dictator is going to need a strong military to fight off the starving hordes of citizens trying to survive. Don't drop the ball too early and you'll be glad you hung in there.

Case Study #4 Iraq

During the 1970's and 1980's the United States sold weapons to Saddam Hussein to help him maintain control of Iraq with chemical weapons, as well as fight a war with Iran. In 1991, after Saddam had overstepped his bounds by invading Kuwait, the United States invaded Iraq and controlled over half of the country until the U.S decided to "invade" Iraq again to remove Saddam in 2003. Subsequently, the U.S. is providing weapons and training to the new Iraqi government.

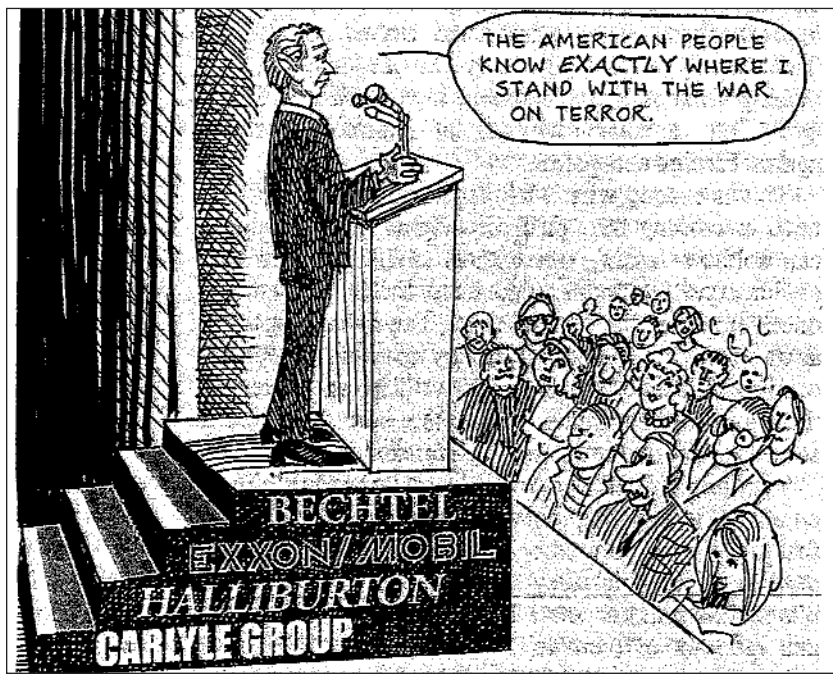
5. Use fear to your advantage. I can't stress this enough. Whatever you do to work the population into a fearful frenzy will pay dividends almost immediately. A fearful population doesn't question anything, especially spending. So keep your eyes open for opportunities to exploit the

fear that is out there. And if you take anything with you as you leave the auditorium this evening, remember this: The fear that you are exploiting does not have to have anything whatsoever to do with where your profits are coming from. I'll say that again so you can have an opportunity to write this down. The fear that you are exploiting does not have to have anything whatsoever to do with where your profits are coming from.

Case Study #5 September 11, 2001

In the spring of 2003, the United States, in response to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, invaded and subsequently occupied Iraq claiming that they had weapons of mass destruction. Iraq had no connections whatsoever to the attacks and no weapons of mass destruction have been found.

Moderator: I believe the Secretary has a few minutes to take some questions from the audience.



Questioner #1: Mr. Secretary, thank you for your service to our great nation and thank you for your talk here this evening. My question involves public opinion. How do you get past those in the public who would question the legitimacy of say, attacking Iraq despite the fact that they had nothing to do with September 11th?

Rumsfeld: Thank you for your kind words and thank you for a great question. This is really a topic that would normally be discussed in a more advanced type of seminar, but I'll do my best to lay some of the groundwork here.

The first thing to remember is that many people will believe what they see on TV, so if you can control the messages the media is sending out, you can keep much of the public at bay for a long enough time to get the job done. This can be done by imbedding journalists with the troops, allowing military contractors to own the media, disinformation, or my particular favorite, distraction. When I said that the weapons of mass destruction were somewhere north, south, east and west of Baghdad, I was just trying to buy time so that the U.S. military



would be too deeply involved in Iraq to even think about withdrawing. And we didn't lose track of the bottom line. With one speech, we single-handedly drove up the sales of duct tape and SUVs. Now that's war profiteering! (applause)

Second, keep in mind that you will not be able to convince everyone. There will be liberals out there who aren't going to get onboard with any war, no matter how much you try to spin it and you need to be prepared for that. You have many tools at your disposal to combat them. Call them un-American, say they don't support the troops, basically just wrap yourself in a flag and let the chips fall where they may.

Questioner #2: Mr. Secretary, thank you for speaking to us tonight. You have really given me

some good ideas so that I can get out there and begin my career as a war profiteer, but I am still worried about one thing and would like your opinion. How do you handle the potential war crimes charges that may result from war profiteering? The War Crimes

Tribunal at The Hague and the United Nations tend to frown upon many of the techniques you have outlined here. I certainly don't want to end up in a cell in some God-forsaken country.

Rumsfeld: (chuckling) You know your question reminds me of the time Hank Kissinger and I were on a plane heading to Spain for a spa treatment when the news hit that Hank

might be wanted for crimes against humanity in the very country we were headed for! (laughter from the audience) Luckily, for Hank anyway, we had a layover in London and we simply got off the plane and had lunch with Tony Blair instead. But for few minutes there in the air it was touch and go. Seriously though, the War Crimes Tribunal and the United Nations and even the Geneva Convention don't really play an important role in the life of a war profiteer. They are quaint little organizations that keep up the appearance of International cooperation, but ultimately they just don't have the teeth to try and convict an American. However, it is important to remember that individual countries can indict you in absentia and that sort of thing can put a damper on your travel plans, but ultimately the inability to travel to one or two insignificant countries pales next to the massive profits one can make from war.

Thank you and good night.

momo Thruouts.

OIL EXECUTIVES WITHOUT BORDERS

OIL EXECUTIVES WITHOUT BORDERS (OEWB) IS A PRIVATE INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION INSPIRED BY THE NON-PARTISAN INTERNATIONAL WORK ACCOMPLISHED BY 'DOCTORS WITHOUT BORDERS.' THE MAIN OBJECTIVE OF OEWB IS TO CARRY OUT MAXIMUM EXPLORATION, DRILLING, AND EXTRACTION OF OIL IRRESPECTIVE OF THE RELIGION, LOCAL ECONOMIC POLICY, OR POLITICS OF THE OIL-BEARING COUNTRY.

BY SARAH MOSER.

Oil Executives Without Borders was founded by a small group of oil executives who believed that all of the earth's oil had the fundamental right to be extracted regardless of the location and current ownership of that oil and that the needs of oil superceded respect for national borders!

Oil Executives Without Borders currently operates in unstable countries around the globe, forming partnerships with local dictators in Sudan, Ivory Coast, Congo, Saudi Arabia, Nigeria, Indonesia and many other democratically-challenged nations!

Oil Executives Without Borders has an impressive membership of individuals who have shown an outstanding commitment to the objectives of the organization!

OEWB MAY START A PROJECT IN A NEW LOCATION WHEN IT IDENTIFIES THE EXISTENCE OF OIL OR WHEN IT HAS BEEN INVITED BY A LOCAL DICTATOR TO BEGIN EXTRACTION. AN EXPLORATORY TEAM WILL VISIT THE SITE TO EVALUATE THE QUANTITY, DRILLING POTENTIAL, THE LEVEL OF HOSTILITY IN THE LOCAL POPULATION, AND DETERMINE IF THE LOCAL MILITARY IS AVAILABLE FOR HIRE.

If you are willing to risk your life to protect the interests of 'Oil Executives Without Borders,' there is always a place for you in the military of the United States of America, where you will serve and protect the freedom and liberty of major oil reserves everywhere!

© 2003 S. Moser 2012 s.moser@unccdesigns.net

RELIGION AND VIOLENCE TODAY: PART II

For the April 2007 issue of the *Maine Peace Action Committee Newsletter* (Vol. 32, No. 3), I wrote an article entitled “Religion and Violence Today: Part I.” At the end of my article, after analyzing many ways that religion is a destructive and negative force, I arrived at the conclusion that it is tempting to evaluate religion as an essential part of the problem, the crisis, of so much violence in the world today; it is not part of the solution. I then indicated that in Part II of my article, I would examine ways that religion can also be a positive constructive force with regard to violence in the world. In this article, I’ll offer several conclusions about the dynamic relations between religion and violence today. Using the approach of Mahatma Gandhi and others, I’ll propose several ways that all of us, whether religious or nonreligious, can relate to religious violence. I’ll propose a number of ways that we can incorporate values of nonviolence, peace, loving kindness, compassion, cooperation, justice, freedom, resistance, and struggle in addressing the most urgent existential and global crises related to the topic of religion and violence. Since I cannot assume that readers have previously read Part I, I’ll begin with a summary of my April 2007 article. For those who would like to read the first part in its entirety, the Maine Peace Action Committee has copies of the April 2007 issue in the Maples Building.

Background from Part I

We cannot understand what is happening in the world today and what will determine a very dangerous and insecure future without understanding the complex and troubling relations of religion and violence. This topic of religion and violence often dominates the daily news about what is happening in Iraq, Afghanistan, Iran, the Middle East, and other parts of the world, and it is also essential for understanding what is happening politically, culturally, economically, and militarily in the United States today.

There are many confusing, contradictory questions that arise when trying to understand the relation between religion and violence. For example, there is no major world religion that has commandments such as “Thou shalt kill,” “Thou shalt be violent,” “Thou shalt be full of hate,” or “Thou shalt be intolerant.” In fact, you find the exact opposite, and all major religions have some version of the Golden Rule. If religions preach peace, why have most wars in history been given a religious justification? If religions believe in nonviolence, why do we have thousands of years of so much religious violence? If religions preach love, why do we have thousands of years of

so much religious hate, especially toward those who do not agree with one’s religious belief? If religions preach tolerance, why are religions some of the major sources of intolerance toward others? If religions preach justice, why do we have religions so often justifying and supporting unjust, exploitative, oppressive, class, race, and gender relations of domination?



Therefore, my major concern in this article is whether religion today is more a source of the problems of violence or whether it can be part of a constructive solution to the crises of so much escalating violence that threatens to destroy us and our planet.

I attempted to define and analyze “violence,” especially by deepening and broadening our understanding by introducing two concepts of the multidimensionality of violence and the violence of the status quo. This was followed by my attempt at defining and analyzing the other key term: “religion.” I provided a universal phenomenological model of religion as a way of analyzing specific religious attitudes, structures, and values.

The longest section in Part I analyzed religion as a destructive and negative force with regard to violence. After providing the familiar illustrations from contemporary Islam and other examples of violent militant fundamentalism found throughout the world, I focused on the violent, often dominant religious forces in the U.S. located in the White House, the Congress, powerful think tanks and special interest lobbying groups of the Christian Right.

I concluded that what needs to be emphasized is the following major danger. The often-dominant, militant, U.S. religious view, with other versions found throughout the world, assumes that we the true believers have an exclusive pipeline to the truth, goodness, and reality, and we are prepared to use any means, including violence and war, to defend and spread our belief in the one true reality. We know what

the sacred is and what God has decreed and commanded us to do. Such faith and certainty about our exclusive, absolute, sacred truth and that God is on our side can then be used to justify all kinds of violence that we would not be able to justify in ethical and other human or secular terms. Any religion that makes such a clear-cut, absolute dichotomy between good and evil invariably upholds the view that we the religious believers are good, and the others, not believing what we do, are evil.

Now with such a worldview, how do you relate to the forces of evil? As I noted, it was very important in Bush’s foundational State of the Union Address to focus on the Axis of Evil. You can deal with disagreement, hate, conflict, etc., but evil is a theological term focusing on the sacred ground of reality. In such a religious framework, evil is usually viewed as a kind of cancer that threatens religious, political, economic, cultural, civilizational purity and goodness; it threatens to tempt and destroy the true religious, political, economic, cultural, civilizational view unless it is eradicated. If you don’t destroy this cancer, it will destroy you. Throughout history, religions that have adopted such a clear-cut dichotomous position of we, the possessors of truth and goodness, versus the others, the possessors of untruth and evil, have all too easily resorted to intolerance, violence, and war in the name of their God or sacred reality.



This is the mindset that is dominating so much of religion in the world and in the United States today. It is a major force contributing to the perpetuation of escalating violence. We must now consider the question as to whether religion can also be a positive constructive force with regard to violence in the world.



Father Jim Gower carries one of 27 banners with names of war dead at Sept. 29, 2007 End the War! Build the Peace! Rally. (Photos in this article are by Judy Rusk.)

Religion as a Constructive and Positive Force with Regard to Violence

One can certainly find numerous resources in the history of religions that criticize violence, war, humanly-caused suffering, greed, selfishness, hate, intolerance, injustice, oppression and exploitation. The Bible, the Koran, the Hindu scriptures, the teachings of the Buddha and Confucius, and other scriptures and sacred texts are full of ethical and spiritual passages praising peacemakers and promoting nonviolence, justice, compassion, loving kindness, tolerance, charity and selfless service to overcome poverty and suffering. One can cite recent leaders—such as Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Dalai Lama—who were deeply religious and have lived remarkable lives inspiring millions of people to embrace constructive and positive values with regard to violence.

For example, the Jewish Bible contains the profound teachings of the Prophets emphasizing the imperative of living our lives based on a commitment to justice and to end war, to turn swords into plowshares, and to achieve harmonious, just, and peaceful relations on earth. The Sermon on the Mount contains some of the most profound teachings on love, how unearned suffering can be both transformative and redemptive, and how we should identify with the needs of the poor and downtrodden. The Koran repeatedly upholds the importance of justice and charity in our human relations. The Buddhist Four Blessed Dispositions emphasize profound ethical and spiritual teachings on loving kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy, and equanimity or balanced serenity. In all of these key religious teachings, as well as numerous other examples, there is a strong and clear warning about and rejection of the kinds of religious violence that are so prevalent in today's world.

In recent years, I've been doing much of my research and lecturing on the philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi, so I'll just share a little of what Gandhi says relevant to our

topic. Gandhi, the best-known proponent of nonviolence in the twentieth century, writes at length about religious violence and is very critical of much of historical, traditional, hierarchical, institutionalized religion responsible for causing and justifying so much violence and suffering. For Gandhi there is much truth in religion, and one should be proud of

what is best in one's own religion. But one must recognize that all religions contain both negative and positive features in their historical and institutional forms, and one should be humble, reflect critically on one's own religion, act to correct its defects, and work for its ethical and spiritual development.

Gandhi upholds an organic, holistic view emphasizing the interrelatedness of all of life. Truth, which he often equates with God, is that unifying ethical and spiritual

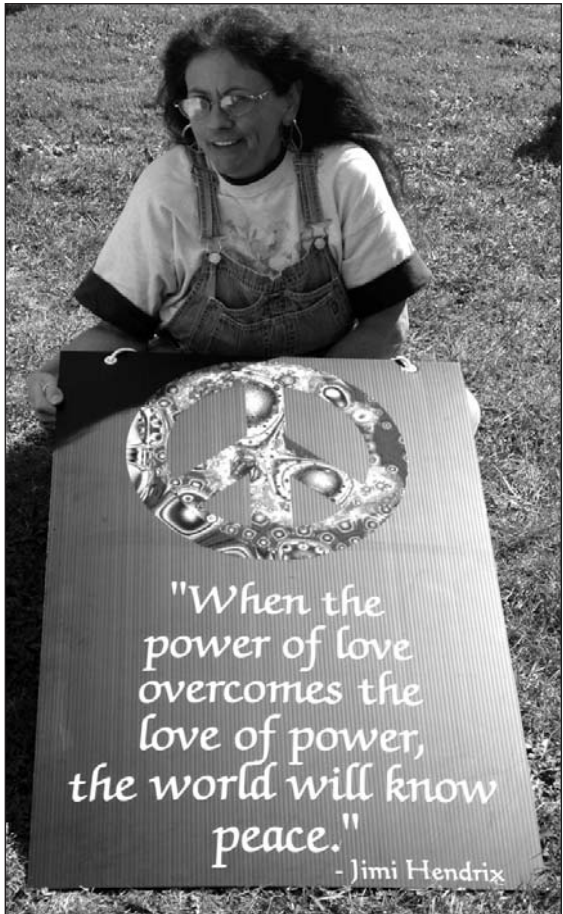
Gandhi makes a basic distinction between the Absolute Truth and the relative truth. As a religious or spiritual human being, Gandhi certainly upholds absolute ideals, such as Truth, God, Self or Soul, Nonviolence, Love, and Religion. However, he submits that human beings—including himself—as finite, limited, fallible beings with embodied consciousness, at most have "glimpses" of the Absolute. We are relative beings moving at best from one relative truth to greater relative truth. No one fully knows Truth or God. Even when we uphold absolute ideals of Nonviolence, we cannot avoid all violence. A major danger, as seen in the history of religions, is to turn our relative truths into the Absolute Truth. Anyone who then rejects our view of "the Truth" has false views, is a sinner, is evil, and must be opposed, even if this sometimes requires war and violence.

For Gandhi, religious persons should uphold their higher ethical and spiritual ideals and should be proud of what is best in their relative formulations, but they should recognize that other people and other religions have their own relative truths; their own relative imperfect paths to the Absolute. This is the basis for Gandhi's famous nonexclusive, nonviolent tolerance,

Gandhi upholds an organic, holistic view emphasizing the interrelatedness of all of life.

force that allows us to engage in meaningful relations with other living beings, nature, and spiritual reality. For Gandhi, true philosophy and religion must be grounded in *ahimsa* or nonviolence, which he often equates with love. Religious, economic, political, and other forms of violence lead to more violence and trap us in endless causal cycles of violence. Religious and other forms of nonviolence and love break the cycles of violence. Violence not only is unethical since it leads to more violence, but it also violates Truth, God, and Reality. It emphasizes essential differences, since the dehumanized other who is evil and is the target of my violence, is falsely viewed as fundamentally unlike me and my religion or group and is a threat to our true faith. Nonviolence and love, on the other hand, are not only ethical since they embrace positive values and intentions and lead to more positive results, but they also are consistent with Truth, God, and Reality. Nonviolence, love, compassion, responses to suffering, and egoless service to meet the needs of others are the unifying forces that hold us together; that bring us into relations emphasizing the interrelatedness of life and the view that what unites or unifies us as part of the meaningful organic whole is more fundamental than what divides us.

which involves respect for other ethical and religious positions, and which emphasizes legitimate diversity and pluralism that is grounded in an underlying interreligious and intercultural interrelatedness and unity. Indeed, for Gandhi, other religious paths have truths that we do not have, and we can even learn from them in developing our own ethical and spiritual position.



Mary Perry at Sept. 29 Rally

Conclusions about Religion and Violence Today

Where does this leave us with respect to the complex relations of religion and violence and the prevalence of so much religious violence in the contemporary world? There are no simple answers. I'll end by suggesting five conclusions and proposals for relating to the crises of religion and violence.

First, as seen in Part I, religion in the U.S. and throughout the world is more of a negative and destructive force when it comes to conflicts of violence and war. Religion is more of the problem than the solution. However, as seen in the previous section, religion can also be a positive and constructive force emphasizing love,



Members of Veterans for Peace and the Voices for Peace Choir read the names off Mainers and Iraqis who have died during the war and occupation.

compassion, tolerance, respect, freedom, human rights, nonviolence, and peace. What we find—not only in every society and culture but also in every religion—is the dynamic, contradictory, creative and destructive tensions that involve contestation, resistance, and struggle. Every religion has war makers and peacemakers; those who promote religious intolerance, hatred, and violence and those dedicated to religious tolerance, nonviolence, compassion, and loving kindness; those who use religion to justify injustice, exploitation, and the destruction of nature and those dedicated to the struggle for justice, freedom from exploitation and oppression, and the sanctity of all life and the planet earth. In short, every real religion contains both negative and positive features, even if the violent and destructive religious forces have been predominant in the contemporary world.

Second, if we are to relate to real religion and real religious violence, we must have a dynamic, flexible, open-ended approach for analyzing the complex relations that hold between texts, contexts, and interpretations of meaning. Such relations involve religious and nonreligious texts, religious and nonreligious contexts, and religious and nonreligious interpretations of meaning. In such an approach, we find that all religions in the world involve numerous real contradictions, including contradictions involving

violence and nonviolence. When we contextualize religion, which is necessary for analyzing real religion and real religious violence, and when we do not treat religion as a collection of detached, noncontextualized, abstract, absolute, spiritual and ethical truths and ideals, then we can address all kinds of economic, class, caste, gender, racial, ethnic, environmental and other contradictions that shape real religions. Using such an approach, we find that religions use and manipulate all kinds of sacred, transcendent ideals and teachings as justifications for class exploitation, wealth and power, domination, sexism, homophobia, racism, injustice, violence, and war.

Third, today we face the most urgent personal, existential, and global crises related to our topic of religion and violence.

These provide numerous opportunities for contradictory responses by religious and nonreligious persons. Unlike my experiences in the Civil Rights Movement, in which religious voices were central, and in the Vietnam/Indochina Antiwar Movement and other struggles, in which religious voices were important, I have found that progressive religious peace and justice voices have usually been barely audible, marginalized, or completely silent in the context of the Bush Administration's aggressive post-9/11 War on Terror and Iraq War invasion and occupation. By way of extreme contrast, the violent, warmongering, religious voices have been loud, aggressive, and central to the economic, political, and military power structure.

For those who are religious or work with people who are religious around issues of violence and who do not want simply to dismiss religion as a negative force in the world today, we must contextualize in the real world the positive religious and nonreligious values of nonviolence, love, compassion, peace, and justice. As part of this process, we must use these positive values to engage and resist those negative religious forces promoting violence, hatred, greed, injustice, and war.

Fourth, what this means is that those who are religious or are nonreligious but are concerned about religion and violence can be part of the problem or part of the solution. You can be part of religions that are perpetuating violence, justifying violent conflict and war, all over the world today and threaten to destroy humankind. Or you can choose to do nothing and thereby be complicit in perpetuating the life-threatening religious violence of the status quo and religious violence as part of linguistic, economic, political, cultural, militaristic,



imperialistic violence that dominates so much of our lives and our world. Or you can identify with religious and nonreligious orientations with pro-active positions that are dedicated to exposing and resisting religious violence throughout the world and in providing constructive nonviolent alternatives

Finally, Mahatma Gandhi offers a profound view of human and cosmic evolution that provides guidance when dealing with religion, violence, and religious violence. As human beings, we have a higher nature and a lower nature; values, motives, and actions that represent our brute nature and others that bring out our ethical and spiritual potential. History books and media reports falsely emphasize that ends justify means, that might makes right, and that the survival of the fittest is determined by those with the most economic and violent power. Gandhi submits that human beings have developed and survived because of our capacity to be touched by and respond to the suffering and needs of others; to live lives full of compassion and loving kindness; and to base our lives on ethical and spiritual principles and actions committed to Truth and Nonviolence. Religion can tap into our best nature, dimensions of our higher ethical and spiritual development. Or religion can tap into our brute nature, our worst nature, and thus become part of the problem of so much violence, hatred, intolerance, and war that causes and justifies so much preventable death and suffering and threatens the survival of humankind and the earth.

—Doug Allen



SHADOW OF A DICTATOR: REFLECTIONS ON PINOCHET

In February 2007, Molly and I traveled to Chile as part of the direct exchange study abroad program at UMaine. We went with only a scant understanding of Chile’s past or culture but intended to learn while we were there. I managed to acquire a book (in English) about the 1973 CIA-supported military coup that brought about the death of socialist leader Salvador Allende and brought Augusto Pinochet to power, and Molly and even took an entire course on the subject. Without this academic preparation, we never would have been able to understand the personal experiences we heard from the friends we made in our five months abroad.

“Hey, look at that”, I said in Spanish to our friend Juan Pablo, pointing at the gigantic graffiti of Salvador Allende and *socialismo* on a nearby wall as Molly and I walked with him to a market in one of the poorer sections of Santiago, Chile. “Allende was a cool guy.”

“Maybe, but I don’t like communism”, he said with a shy shrug.

“Why not?”

“Because I believe in God. I am a Catholic”

Such is an example of the complex relationship between religion, politics, and recent history in the minds of Chileans today. The country is currently in a state of growth and positive national outlook. It is considered the most stable and prosperous country in South America.

“If it weren’t for Pinochet, Chile would not be the country that it is today. We are much more advanced and sturdy on our own two feet. I don’t exactly agree with the way he brought about this change, through killing all of those people, but it had to happen somehow.”

Molly’s host mother, Enriqueta, told her during one of their few talks about Pinochet’s military dictatorship and its ways of provoking “change.”

Even over 30 years after the coup, public opinion clearly is not completely against the recently deceased Augusto Pinochet, as one would imagine after the iron-handed man’s power managed to kill or “disappear” many thousands of innocent civilians. In our travels throughout Chile, we encountered much evidence of the lasting influence of the military dictatorship, in people and in places, but perhaps the most interesting was from Molly’s host home.

We had similar situations where we lived. An upper-middle class home, well-to-do families, and each with a maid who lived in the poorer sections on the outskirts of Santiago, but Molly in particular had deep

conversations and developed lasting relationships with both her host family and the maid that had worked for them for nine years.

This is what she learned:

I lived with a family of four in a part of Santiago called Las Condes, an area made up mostly of either high-rise apartment buildings or beautiful neighborhood homes. My host parents worked in the center of the city in an insurance and investments building and my two host brothers were enrolled in private universities. They were busy, often at work or school from early morning until late at night. They had little to no time to do things around the house, so like most middle-class or above families in Santiago, they had a maid. Her name was Luisa Viviana Tobar Garrido, but she went by Luchita. A lot of the time it would just be she and I in the apartment, and after a few weeks of me becoming somewhat sure of my Spanish and Luchita becoming used to having a new person in the house, we slowly began to get to know each other.

She grew up in Santiago in an area called Santa Rosa, way in the south of the city, about an hour away from where I called home. She had two siblings and a father and they all lived simply together.

When she was about fifteen years old she wandered outside her home when she heard a loud gunshot from across the field. Her father called after her to come back inside, that it wasn’t safe, but her curiosity made her deaf to his request. As she peered through the trees across the clearing a bullet sped through the air and right above her head. The bullet had strayed from a soldier’s gun not far from her family’s home during a raid. It was something completely unfamiliar to her and she was immediately sobered by the fact that the distant coup had come to her village, that it was real.

Later that year she was walking down a street, a much more guarded person, as everyone had become, when a large four-sided truck drove by with the top open to the air. Everyone on the street began to feel sick from an unbearable smell. It wasn’t until Luchita looked up at the truck passing by and saw a limp forearm and hand hanging out the top that she realized the smell

was human bodies, people that had been captured and killed, being driven to a place to fade into thin air as people who “disappeared”.

She was one of many who were accosted during their everyday chores such as buying bread at the store, by the military that would ransack businesses and violently question and often capture civilians. She lay on the floor of the store with her hands behind her back while guns were pointed at her and the others’ heads. Another time, the military burst into her house and threw her and her brother and sister into one room while they accused their father of being a socialist and pulled apart their home looking for evidence. Once again, her family barely made it out alive.

Thirty some-odd years later Luchita recounted all of this to me in the dining room of my host family’s fancy apartment. A woman in her fifties, now with three children and a grandchild of her own, she still had to catch her breath during her story. She told me of man’s capacity to be cruel, of the injustice done to her country, of the continuing mystery surrounding Pinochet’s era, the families who still know nothing of the whereabouts of their loved ones, of how much she loves her seven year old granddaughter, Janis.

We went to Chile knowing little about the coup, but believed that what we knew determined that Chileans would be overwhelmingly against Pinochet and regretful of that entire era. But just as many Chileans assume that all Americans support George W. Bush and the invasion of Iraq, most Americans assume that all Chileans must have been anti-Pinochet. We found instead that things are never so black-and-white, and that Chile and its history are as complex as that of any other country, including our own.

—Molly Haley and Jeff Hake



From left: Luchita’s son Pablo, her granddaughter Janis, her daughter Karina, Luchita, her daughter Marcia, and Marcia’s husband Hernan. This photo was taken in March 2007, in Luchita’s garden behind her house in Santa Rosa, Santiago, Chile.

PREOCCUPATIONS

“This is one issue on which, as you know, there is a left-right break in America, there are still a few people-like Chomsky, Gore Vidal, or Alexander Cockburn-who are willing to raise it publicly. But most people tend to think that it is better left to the crazies.”

This remark comes from the American literary flower of the Palestinian Diaspora, Edward Said, and could not be more indicative of the state of mind of most concerning the occupation. America has had a twisting relationship with Israel since, and before, its inception as a nation state, this relationship is one that is indicative of many factors concerning western influence on the “Orientalized” countries of the Middle and Far East.

Palestine’s demise is ultimately a story of Imperialism. Palestine was a member of the Ottoman Empire until the end of the First World War, while on the surface Palestine seems simplistic in its domestic curves of change-even provincial, for the Arab world-there were numerous forces working behind the scenes. Numerous *powerful* forces.

The first Zionist colony in Palestine was founded in 1878; this colony was humble at first, yet in turn would sew the seeds of a flood. In 1896 a German millionaire established a branch of his Jewish Colonization Association in Palestine; within one year Theodor Hertzl published the seminal Zionist text *Der Judenstaat*, and convened the first Zionist conference in Switzerland. These programs would extend to London by 1901, creating the Jewish National Fund, which sought to buy land in Palestine to create exclusivistic Jewish settlements.

With fast growing financial support and theologically driven immigration, powerful British Zionist Baron Walter Rothschild was in correspondence with the British Secretary of State Arthur Balfour, and in 1917 received a secret letter promising the British support for a national home for the Jewish peoples in Palestine. In October 1918 the whole of Palestine was under British occupation, by 1920 there were approximately 36 Zionist settlements in Palestine. The escalation of Zionist presence grew rapidly; 30,000 Jews immigrated in 1933, 42,000 immigrated in 1934, 61,000 immigrated in 1935.

By this time there was a tangible Palestinian resistance to this rapid colonization, this generation of the colonized was one of very little influence and power. With the unwillingness of Americans and Britons to accept the mass amounts of Jewish immigrants, Zionism felt the affects of a political ricochet in its favor. During the early forties there was a Zionist conference held in

Maryland and the support of American Jews was acquired smoothly. With the collapse of Britain’s empire and America’s already substantial immigration issues, as well as enormous western guilt for the horrendous atrocities of World War II, the international infrastructure was nailed tight. All that was needed was formal support for the commencement of a partitioned state.

The initial partition in 1947 afforded the Jews 5,500 square miles and the indigenous Palestinians 4,500 square miles; even though Jews made up no more than 35 percent of the population. The partition was passed in the UN with heavy personal pressure and intervention by President Harry Truman; no Asian or African nations-save for Liberia and the Philippines-voted in favor of this resolution; even the Canadian ambassador expressed regret with his vote in favor of the resolution. On May 14, 1948 Israel came into existence at 6:01PM Washington time; Truman officially recognized Israel by 6:11PM.

America began insinuating itself into the colonial Middle East around the time of the Second World War. In America we suffer from the disease of conflicting, and dogmatic political entities. There is always a polarized split and myriad institutional inconsistencies. When thinking of the United States of America’s actions in the world today it is undeniable that there is a steel tether to the issue of Palestine and Israel.

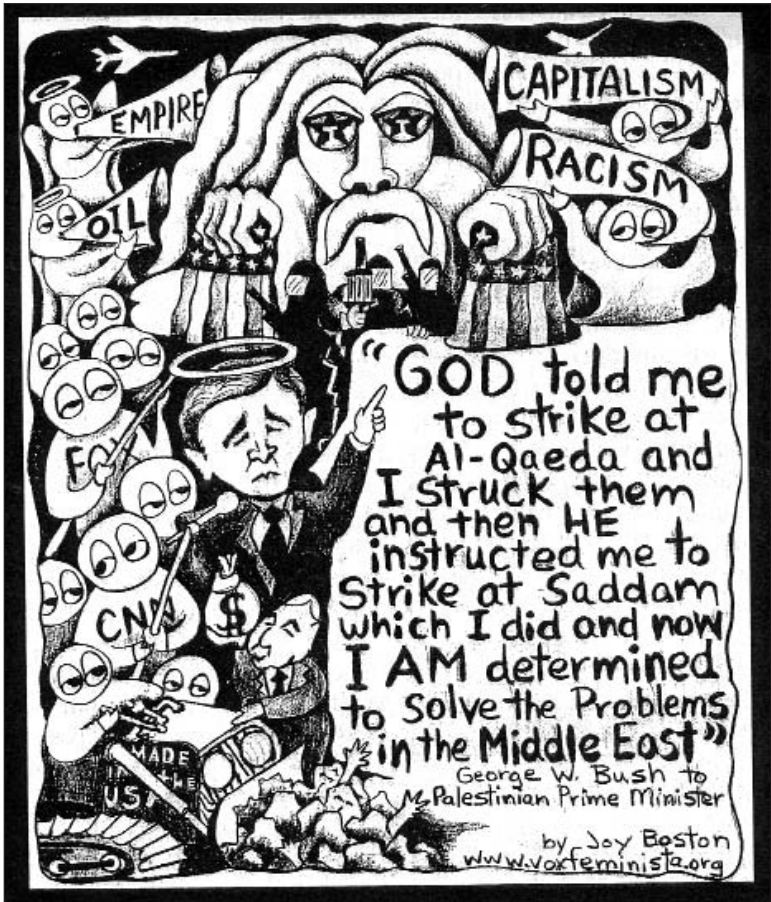
The Middle East was affected severely by colonialism and imperialism, the exactness with which resources and other profitable entities were extracted and manipulated is the cause of the continuing radicalism that

we have seen for the past one hundred years. When indigenous persons are pushed into powerlessness, and there is a domestic isolation of power, the body and the mind become the weapon, the heart and its actions become suffused and bastardized by the tools of forms of nationalism. Liberation isn’t cheap, or easy.

History and its dependant variables are of utter importance to all future actions that nation states proceed with; this is a fact that few nation states allow themselves to be reconciled with. The solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is easy; restore the UN partition of 1947, with the guarantee of citizenship and equal civil rights before the law in both nations. Will this happen? It is impossible to say, regardless, there will not be an absence of domestic prejudice for Jews or Arabs.

Times progress swiftly and always strongly, ethics and morals-especially political tend to lag and perpetuate conservative tendencies. Discerning complicity with the past, as opposed to cretinous complicity, is necessary; with power must come conscientiousness, with action must come respect. America and Israel are bound, and they are the most powerful entities in their regions of the world. There must be the conscious disjunction of the imperialist colonial cycle of destruction, there must be the actions of respect, human respect, respect for life and its innate innocence. —Adam Davis

The sources which provoked and contributed to this article include but are not limited to: Before their Diaspora: a photographic history of the Palestinians, 1876–1948; text by Walid Khalidi; Edward Said’s After the Last Sky: Palestinian Lives, and The Politics of Dispossession; The Jewish Virtual Library which includes Der Judenstaat transl. Sylvie D’Avigdor.



TEN REASONS VOTING DEMOCRAT ISN'T ENOUGH

1. Congressional leaders say impeachment of Bush is “off the table.”
2. Senate Democrats continued to support the war by not approving Sen. Feingold’s legislation that would have required the United States to begin a military pullout from Iraq with complete pullout by March 31, 2008 (S.Amdt. 1098 to S.Amdt. 1097 to H.R. 1495).
3. Democrats use language that blames Iraqis for the current situation, insinuating they’re lazy and ungrateful rather than devastated by the U.S. destruction of infrastructure and subsequent corruption. This shows either a lack of understanding or cold political colonialism.
4. Democrats passed the Protect America Act permitting the National Security Agency to monitor large groups of people without obtaining individual warrants. In an amendment act, Democrats have caved on the White House’s request to grant immunity to the telecom corporations that aided the NSA in spying on Americans.
5. Special interests and corporate lobbyists are now giving more money to Democrats than Republicans after the 2006 switch.
6. In May of 2007, Democrats passed Bush’s request for more war funding without strings attached.
7. In September of 2007 the Senate with a vote of 72-25 passed a resolution condemning MoveOn.org for publishing a newspaper ad questioning the credibility of Iraq war general David Petraeus. Valuable time spent on discouraging freedom of speech.
8. The Senate passed a bill 76-22 that urges the Bush administration to label the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps, part of Iran’s military, a terrorist organization. This bill sets the rhetorical groundwork of a further escalation of war in Iraq to war with Iran.
9. Democrats have not followed up on the witnesses such as Harriet Myers and Karl Rove who blatantly refused to show for congressional hearings.
10. Democrats continue to deny *Habeas Corpus* rights, making them not fit to lead.

Voting Democrat just isn’t enough.

—David Reid

George W. Bush is requesting \$190 billion dollars to continue paying for the war up to Oct. 2008. Call, write, protest your Democratic Congress to oppose the funding measures.

Maine: Sen. Collins: (202) 224-2523
Sen. Snowe: (202) 224-5344
Rep. Michaud: (202) 225-6306
Rep. Allen: (202) 225-6116



Corporate Colonialism



Peace & Justice Film Series Available at Fogler

For the last 30 years, the Maine Peace Action Committee has organized the MPAC Peace & Justice Film Series every spring semester at the University of Maine. This series consists of weekly screenings of movies and documentary films covering a broad range of peace, social justice and environmental topics and facilitated discussions after each film.

Now, for the first time, many of these videos and DVDs have been made available for checkout at the Media Resource Center on the second floor of Fogler Library. Anyone with a valid MaineCard is eligible to check out the films for 48 hours. Currently 18 titles have been cataloged in URSUS, with more to be added each semester.

Selected titles that are available include *Iraq for sale: the war profiteers*; *Bush family fortunes: the best democracy money can buy*; *The end of suburbia: oil depletion and the collapse of the American dream*, and others. To see the full list of titles available in this series, please visit <http://ursus.maine.edu> and do a keyword search for “MPAC”.

These films are available for private screening only. Fogler Library does not own public performance rights and takes no responsibility for anyone who violates copyright restrictions by publicly screening these films. Anyone who wishes to publicly screen one of these films should contact the Maine Peace Action Committee first to find out about public screening options.

For more information, please contact Martin Wallace at martin.wallace@umit.maine.edu or at 581-1678.

Contributors

Doug Allen
Adam Davis
Jeff Hake
Molly Haley
Andrea Johnsen
Jeff Lowell
David Reid
Anna Sweeney
Daya Taylor
Martin Wallace

Funded in part by University of Maine
Student Government

Publication services by Eric T. Olson

Opinions expressed in this Newsletter are those of individual members of MPAC and other university and community activists. They do not necessarily express the views of other MPAC members or of the group as a whole. We know that other readers may not agree with all that is stated in this issue, and we encourage your response.

The Maine Peace Action Committee has its general meeting every Tuesday at 4:00 pm in the Virtue Room of the Maples Building on the University of Maine Campus. Meeting times and dates may change. MPAC often has subcommittees working on topics of special interest to current members. MPAC also organizes film series, speakers, teach-ins, workshops, concerts, reading groups, demonstrations, and other peace and justice actions. For more information on MPAC, call 581-3860. If you are interested in peace education and activism, please join us. <http://www.umaine.edu/mpac/>

We trust that you have enjoyed reading past issues of the MPAC Newsletter. If you have not renewed your subscription or have not made a contibution to MPAC during the past year, please return the following form to us. (Please make checks payable to Maine Peace Action Committee.):

Yes, I'd like to continue to receive the MPAC Newsletter!

_____ Here's \$5.00 for my annual subscription.

_____ Here's an extra contribution to help pay for the Newsletter.

_____ I'm short on cash now, but please keep me on your mailing list.

Name: _____

Mailing address: _____

Town/State/Zip: _____

Please return to:

Maine Peace Action Committee, Memorial Union, University of Maine, Orono, ME 04469

MAINE PEACE ACTION COMMITTEE

Memorial Union

University of Maine

Orono, ME 04469 (Change Service Requested)

PRSRT STD

U.S. POSTAGE PAID

ORONO, ME 04469

PERMIT NO. 34

Maine Peace Action Committee

NEWSLETTER



Volume 33, Number 1

Fall 2007



Five of the 500 demonstrators at the “End the War! Build the Peace!” Rally on September 29, 2007 in Bangor
(Photo by Judy Rusk)